

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension of Narrative Text through Comic Strips

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to improve the students' reading ability, especially in comprehending a narrative text. This research was conducted at the tenth grade students of SMAN 2 Sungai Raya in academic year 2016/2017. In this research, the subject was XA that consists of 34 students. The researcher conducted a classroom action research. The data were collected by both measurement technique and observation. The tools of data collecting were observation checklist, field note, and test. Comic strips was used as the teaching media in this research which was conducted in two cycles. The research findings showed that students' individual score, on the first cycle there were 18 students of 34 students passed the test. On the second cycle, 29 students passed the test. The reading comprehension of narrative text of the tenth grade students of A class of SMAN 2 Sungai Raya in academic year 2016/2017 improved by using comic strips media

Keywords: Comic Strips, Narrative Text, Reading

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the language skills of English that the students should master. It is one of learning ways for students to increase their ability and knowledge. English as a foreign language in Indonesia has been studied for a long time, from the elementary school to senior high school, but still many students cannot apply the correct English. One of the problems is they have poor ability in reading skill especially in comprehending the text. Reading skill is necessary for students to access information or to understand texts and another skills of English.

According to Silberstein (1994) reading is a complex information processing skill in which the reader interacts with text in order to create meaningful discourse. In order to reach the meaningful discourse itself the readers

have to interact and be able to comprehend the text to obtain the information, and the goal of reading is to comprehend the meaning of the text.

Reading comprehension is the act of understanding and interpreting the information within a text (Shanahan, 2006). Moreover, reading comprehension is an attempt to understanding or constructing the author's ideas of reading text as what Klingner, et al (2007, p.2) state reading comprehension is "the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading, word and world knowledge, and fluency". Therefore, the readers need comprehension to get the content of message or information from the text.

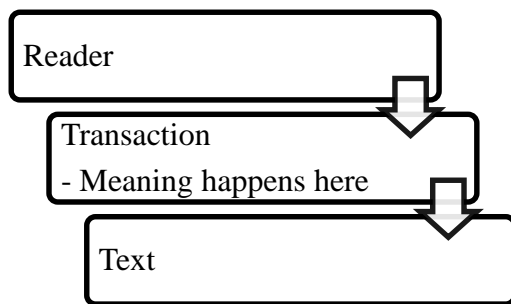


Figure 1. Transaction Process

Based on the figure 1 above, comprehension occurs in the transaction between the reader and the text (Kucer in Pardo, 2004). The readers do transaction in order to understanding the meaning of the text.

The researcher discussed reading comprehension of a narrative text in this research. Narrative text is a text that tells a story, with the social functions are to inform, entertain, or amuse the readers (Hastuti, 2010). The researcher chose this topic because on teaching learning process in the past over the tenth grade students of SMAN 2 Sungai Raya, the researcher found a problem and several factors regarding the students' ability in reading narrative text. From the researcher's observation and interview to the English teacher on 27th of February 2017, the main problem was the students were not able to comprehend a narrative text well, and the factors are: (1) The students were not interested in learning narrative text. They were reluctant to read the text, especially when they have to read the whole story of narrative text. They were often bored while teaching learning process took place. (2) The students could not comprehend the specific information of the text well through the guidance of 5W+1H questions. (3) The students had lack of vocabulary. The students did not know the meaning of English words within the text. Their lack

of vocabulary influenced their skill to comprehend the text.

Those problems made students become less active in teaching learning process. Therefore, in order to make the students easier to improve their reading comprehension of narrative text, the students need a teaching media which can get their interest and lead them to read narrative text better as Puttnam (2010) said that teaching media is the heart of any educational in the twenty-first century

One of the teaching media that can be implemented to improve students' reading comprehension is comic strips. According to Ravelo (2013), the power of comics relies on the fact that they are entertaining, and the power of words and images create a non-conventional atmosphere which can get students' interest in reading.

A comic strip is defined as a series of pictures inside boxes that tell a story (Liu, 2004). Espada (2003) states comic strip is humorous narrative sequence of cartoon panels. Moreover he states that comic strip is the sequence of cartoon panels where the story is presented, usually by dialogue, narration, or purely visual symbols. In conclusion comic strip is a piece of picture or pieces of pictures combined to become a humorous story or plot in sequence of panels.

Here are some steps in presenting the material with comic strips:

(1) Exploration (Before reading) (a) The teacher brainstorms the students. The teacher shows them some pictures on power point, and asks the students to guess the title of the story from the pictures, then asks them to tell about the story shortly. Then the teacher asks some questions about narrative text as stimulus. (b) The teacher explains about the material of narrative text.

(2) Elaboration (During reading) (a) The teacher gives the comic strips for each

students. (b) The teacher gives the example how to read the comic strips. (c) The teacher explains about the generic structure of a narrative text inside the comic, such as orientation, complication, and resolution, and then explain about the elements of a narrative text and 5W + 1H question that can be found on each generic structures. (d) The students do synonym antonym matching test.

(3) Confirmation (After reading) (a) The students comprehend the text by answering the questions. (b) The teacher ends the class by concluding the lesson material with the students, and also asks the students difficulty during the teaching learning process.

Those are the steps that was implemented in this research. By doing those steps the students were expected to solve their problems. Specifically, the use of comic strips make students interested to read a narrative text, to learn vocabulary and the grammatical features, and to identify the structure of the text, and also to identify the specific information of a narrative text. In short, the purpose of this research was to discover how comic strips media can improve students' reading comprehension of narrative text of the tenth grade students of SMAN 2 Sungai Raya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method that is used in this research was classroom action research focus on improving the students' reading comprehension through comic strips. According to Mettetal (2001), "Classroom action research (CAR) is a method of finding out what works best in your own classroom so that you can improve student learning". The researcher needs to jump into the field and fix the students'

problems by himself through his own technique or media in teaching learning process, as Mettetal (2001) also states that the goal of CAR is to improve your own teaching in your own classroom. The use of CAR is not just to fix the students' problem, but also to make the teacher teaches the students better.

In this action research, the researcher collaborated with the English teacher. There were two cycles of procedures was conducted in this research. In each cycle involves four steps, they are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Burns, 2010).

1. Plan

In planning phase. The researcher planned the teaching activity to overcome the students' problem. The researcher prepared several things before conducting the research, such as teaching media, lesson plan, observation checklist, field note, and test items.

2. Action

In this research, the researcher acted as the teacher applying the method and the English teacher acted as the collaborator observing the situation that happened in the classroom. The researcher applied the teaching through comic strips to improve the students' reading comprehension, while the English teacher divided their job as taking note in the form of observation checklist and field note.

3. Observe

In this phase, the researcher observed systematically the effect of the action based on the observation checklist and field note. This phase can be called as data collection phase.

4. Reflect

At this point, the researcher reflected the data, evaluated and explained the effect of the action which has been done in order to know what happened and what needed to be solved.

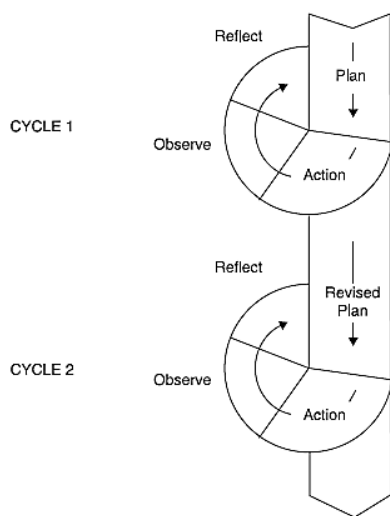


Figure 2. Burns (2010, p.9)

The subject of this research was the tenth grade students of SMAN 2 Sungai Raya in academic year 2016/2017 in A class which has 34 students. The researcher chose the tenth grade of SMAN 2 Sungai Raya as the setting of research because the teacher suggested to use that class.

The observation technique was applied through observation checklist and field note. They were implemented to recognize students' improvement through comic strips, while the measurement technique implemented through the test to know the students' progress. The researcher used the observation checklist which was provided with some indicators in order to have wider perspectives of outcome. In field note process, the collaborator wrote down and lists anything happened when the research was being conducted. The field note was very useful

to record the progress in the classroom. The test that used to acquire the students' score of reading comprehension. The test form was multiple-choice test with five options which consist of 20 questions.

Data analysis was the process of collecting data especially in the test process in order to get the students' score. Based on the test, there were 20 questions of multiple choice that the researcher assessed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

A classroom action research method had been conducted in this research. Comic strips were used as media in order to improve the students' reading comprehension skill of narrative text.

This research was conducted in two cycles. The researcher acted as the teacher and the English teacher acted as the collaborator. The researcher did the action while the English teacher observed what was happening in the classroom in order to obtain the objective data by filling the observation checklist and field notes.

At the end of the class in each cycles, the researcher gave a task through comic strips to the students in order to measure the students' reading comprehension of narrative text. The teacher gave the comic strips task that consist of 20 questions.

The research findings were discussed based on the data from observation checklist, field notes and the students' score. The researcher used mean score formula to compute the class performance.

First Cycle (May 16th 2017)

There were three steps that the researcher did in the first cycle in order to improve the students' reading comprehension skill through comic strips. They include Exploration (before reading), Elaboration (during reading),

and Confirmation (after reading). However, the use of comic strips started from the elaboration step.

First step, exploration, the teacher showed the students some pictures on power point, and asked the students to guess the title of the story from the pictures, and then asked them to tell about the story shortly. The result was that the students gave positive response in this pre-activity. The students felt excited and most of them shout out when the teacher asked them to guess the title from the pictures has been showed.

Second step, elaboration, the teacher showed the students a comic strips entitled “Bawang Merah Bawang Putih” as the visual aid, and the story of it above the comic strips. The teacher gave instructions how to read the comic to the students first. After that, the teacher gave chance to the students to read the story by themselves. Next, the teacher explained about the generic structure inside the comic, such as the orientation of the story is located on the first until the third panel of comic.

The complication is on the fourth until the ten panel, and the resolution is on the last page that is eleventh until the thirteen panel. One of the element of a narrative text is who the characters are that the students can find on the orientation part, and the characters are Bawang Putih, Bawang Merah, etc, when and where the story happened can be found on the orientation part. What, how, and why the story happened can be found on the complication part.

The setting of place can be found on all background panel pictures. The students can understand more about the generic structure by looking at the pictures on the comic. Then, the students did the synonym antonym matching test in order to gain their vocabulary more.

The result of this step was the students felt confused when the teacher explained about the generic structure of narrative text, some of them could not differentiate of each structures, and they were confused about the plots of story. When the teacher showed them comic strips as the media in teaching learning, the students felt excited and curious, because they never learned through comic before, but the students confused the way how to read the comic, some students were still passive in teaching learning process, and some of them did not pay attention to the teacher’s explanation. The class was not controlled well.

Third step was confirmation. After those activities above, the teacher gave comic strips exercise entitled “Snow White” consist of 20 questions. The teacher ended the class by concluding the lesson material. However, the result was not satisfied yet, they took very long time to finish the task.

The result of the students’ achievement was unsatisfied. There were only 18 students of 34 students passed the test.

Based on the result of the first cycle, it could be concluded that the first cycle still needed some improvement to be done in the next cycle. The teacher needs to explain more about the generic structure and the plots of narrative text. The teacher should put ordinal number in comic and differentiate the color of caption box with the balloon/bubble one in order to make the students understand better how to use it. The teacher should control the class well, so the students would pay more attention to the explanation and they could understand more about the material. The teacher needs to make the students work in group first for discussing the main idea, generic structure, and the elements of

narrative text, then they will do another task individually for another story.

Second Cycle (May 22nd 2017)

In this phase the researcher prepared the lesson plan with some improvements. In order to overcome the problems of the first cycle.

The first step, exploration. The teacher showed the students “Timun Mas” comic strips which had been redesigned, the teacher put the guiding line within the text in order to make the students more understand about the generic structure and the plot of a narrative text. The teacher put ordinal in comic and differentiate the color of caption box with the balloon/bubble one in order to make the students more understand how to use it. The result was that the students became more interested in learning because they had already fully understood how to use the comic strips.

Second step, elaboration. The teacher made the students work in group to make the students more active in teaching learning process. The students worked in group of 4 to 5 students to identify the detail information by answering of 5W + 1H question, and identify the elements of “Timun Mas” comic. After that, the students did the synonym antonym matching test also. The teacher controlled the class by walking around monitoring the students. At the end, the teacher and the students discussed about the correct answer. The result was the teacher could control the class well. Most of the students paid attention to the teacher and made the students more understand about the material. The students were more active by discussing the elements of narrative text through group work.

Third step, confirmation. The teacher gave comic strips exercise entitled “Cinderella” consist of 20 questions. The

teacher ended the class by concluding the lesson material with the students. The result was the students did the individual task faster than the first cycle.

The result of the students’ achievement was satisfied. There were 29 students of 34 students passed the test. So, there were more students passed the test in the second cycle rather than in the first cycle.

On the reflecting stage, the teacher and collaborator concluded that the second cycle had been successful. The students’ mean score improved. The problems happened in first cycle had been solved. The indicators of success were fulfilled. The teaching learning process was better than the first cycle. And the result was satisfying.

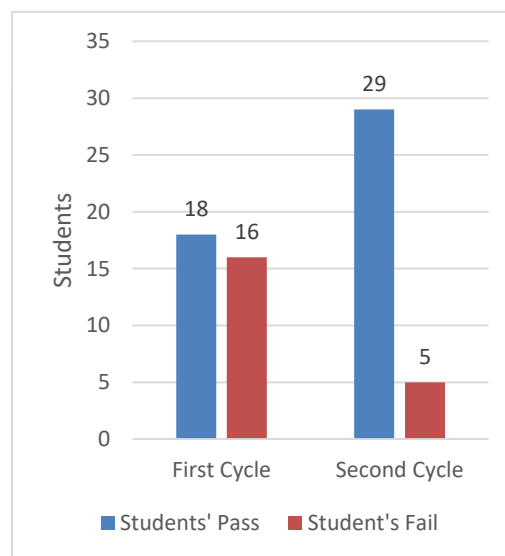


Figure 3. Students’ Achievement Table

Discussion

In conclusion, the reading comprehension skill of narrative text of the tenth grade students of A class of SMAN 2 Sungai Raya in academic year 2016/2017 improved by using comic strips media. The teaching media could get the

students' interest in learning narrative text. The teaching media also made the students easier in comprehending the narrative text. The teaching media made the students understand more about vocabulary inside the comic. Students' mean score increased and teaching learning process became better. Thus, the prediction of the action hypotheses was accepted.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it is concluded that cycle by cycle the use of comic strips as teaching media in teaching narrative texts had successfully improved the students' reading comprehension on reading the texts.

In the first cycle, the comic strips had made the students felt excited and curious, because they never learned through comic before, but the students confused the way how to read the comic, some students were still passive in teaching learning process, and some of them did not pay attention to the teacher's explanation.

Therefore, the result of the test score was not satisfied yet. There were only 18 students who passed the standard minimum score, while the rest still failed.

However, in the second cycle the comic strips had made the students do better in comprehending the narrative text because they had already fully understood how to use the comic strips. The students were more active by discussing the elements of narrative text through group work. It was because the researcher redesigned the comic strips, the researcher put ordinal number and differentiate the color of the caption box on the comic strips.

As a result, their test score of the second cycle improved. There were only 5 students who failed while the 29 students

were successful to reach the standard minimum score.

To sum up, teaching comprehension of narrative text through comic strips media made the students interested in learning a narrative text. The teaching media also made the students easier in comprehending the narrative text. The teaching media made the students understand more about vocabulary inside the comic strips. The reading comprehension skill of narrative text of the tenth grade students of A class of SMAN 2 Sungai Raya in academic year 2016/2017 improved by using comic strips teaching media.

Suggestion

To make comic strips is more effective media to improve reading comprehension of narrative text, the teacher should provide attractive comic strips in order to make the students more interested to read the whole story in the comic strips. The teacher should design the comic strips creatively in order to make the students easier to read the comic strips and understand more about the story inside it, such as the teacher should put ordinal number in comic strips, and should differentiate the color of the caption box and the balloon/bubble box. The teacher should let the students work collaboratively in order to make the students more active and more confident in teaching learning process.

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